

Today, Congressman Stark offered two amendments in the Ways & Means Human Resources Subcommittee to improve the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reauthorization legislation, which will extend the welfare law. The first amendment would increase the meager funding levels in TANF for childcare assistance. The second amendment would redirect the \$200 million in the Republican bill targeted at marriage promotion programs to a state bonus program for childhood poverty reduction and to state efforts to increase work support programs and assist welfare recipients get jobs that pay a living wage. Both amendments failed on party line votes.

“I’m very disappointed by the party line vote on my amendments,” Rep. Stark said. “The reauthorization of TANF this year gives us a unique opportunity to correct some of the problems in the underlying law. We can make improvements to the program so that welfare better fulfills the appropriate goal of raising families out of poverty – not just getting them off the welfare rolls. Unfortunately, the Ways and Means Republicans have no interest in such improvements. Today’s one-sided mark up makes that abundantly clear.”

Rep. Stark continued: “My first amendment would have provided more funds in the Child Care Community Block Grant to assist families with child care costs. Finding adequate childcare is one of the largest obstacles facing poor mothers and fathers who are trying to work, but have no one to watch their children. Providing them with childcare assistance is proven to help them succeed at work. Republicans should be jumping at the chance to promote work assistance of this nature.”

“My second amendment addresses the misguided policy of spending government resources to promote marriage. My amendment would have taken those funds and redirected them to programs that we know help stabilize families: job training, transportation services, child care and health care. The best way to promote stable families is to provide the support necessary for poor families to sustain and better themselves financially. It would also have provided bonus grants to states that reduce childhood poverty levels. Government propaganda encouraging marriage doesn’t help these efforts at all,” said Rep. Stark.

Welfare reauthorization may be considered by the full Committee on Ways and Means as early as next week.

## **STARK OFFERS TWO AMENDMENTS TO IMPROVE TANF (WELFARE REFORM) REAUTHORIZATION**

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Rep. Stark concluded, "I'll continue fighting to redirect welfare reform to the goal of reducing child poverty and helping families move from welfare to sustainable incomes on their own. But, today's mark up shows this will be a difficult battle."